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THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF AMERICA IN ITALY.

BY THE MOST REVEREND JOHN IRELAND, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL.

A STATEMENT of the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America relative to the mission maintained by that Church in Italy was given to the public from Philadelphia May 9th by the Secretary of the Board, Bishop Wilson. The statement is important, referring as it does, in most official form, to the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Italy and in connection with this to a recent occurrence in Rome in which a most distinguished American citizen, however much without will or expectation of his own, was made to take a notable part. The statement of the Bishops upholds and justifies the work of the Methodist mission in Italy, claims that adverse criticism of that work is nought else than falsehood and calumny, and assigns to the mind of the Vatican in its connection with the aforesaid occurrence other motives than those avowed by the Cardinal Secretary of State, said by him to rise from the attitude which the Vatican holds itself obliged to adopt towards the work of the Methodist mission. Truth with regard to the Methodist mission and justice with regard to the Vatican bid me controvert *in toto* the statement of the Bishops.

The pertinent points in the statement of the Bishops follow :

“We cannot allow to pass unnoticed the recent unprovoked and unwarranted attempt to discredit one of our most useful missions by widely published accusations which if based upon truth would bring dishonor upon the Church which supports that mission.

“We regret that after repeated challenges for details of the specific acts supposed to justify these charges they still remain in such general terms that their validity cannot be tested before the judgment of the world. We can only observe: That the methods of our mission in Italy,

now for the first time publicly condemned, are the same that have been pursued from the beginning, almost forty years ago.

"From these facts the inference appears to be irresistible that other considerations than the methods of our mission in Rome must have been the real cause of this sudden outcry. . . . Had there been any other way to avoid certain issues of etiquette and precedence created by co-incident circumstances of a public nature, the Methodist mission might have escaped calumny, and thus lost the valuable recognition of its success.

"We now content ourselves with affirming our entire confidence in the moral integrity of our missionaries and methods in Italy, and against the denunciations of their accusers we place the wide-open record of the Methodist Episcopal Church, both as to teaching and method in America and throughout the world."

In what I write I discuss neither Methodism nor Methodists in general: I confine myself to the aims and methods of the Methodist propaganda in Italy. I seek no quarrel, I desire none with members in general of the Methodist Church in America, many of whom I personally know and esteem, with all of whom as fellow Americans I wish to live in peace and harmony. Indeed, I dare say this much, that, so far as I am able to judge, the great number of American Methodists are not aware of the nature of the propaganda carried on across the ocean in their name and with the help of their money, and when informed of the facts in the case will be as ready as I am to censure both the aims the propaganda has in view and the methods it is willing to employ.

The statements I make are drawn from Methodist authorities or such others as allow no doubt with regard to reliability. My Methodist authorities are: "Four and One-half Years in the Italy Mission—A Criticism of Missionary Methods," by Rev. Everett S. Stackpole, D.D., "Europe and Methodism," by William Burt, one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church," "*Cenni Storici della Chiesa Methodistica Episcopale*" and "*L'Evangelista*."

"Four and One-half Years in the Italy Mission" is particularly enlightening. The writer, as his every line shows, is an ardent, loyal Methodist who during four and one-half years labored with all the energy of his soul to spread Methodism in Italy, retaining throughout a bitter hatred of Catholicism. His book is a semi-official report to his fellow Methodists of America on conditions of Methodism in Italy. The letter of the Bishop

naming him to the Italian mission desires him "to give the Church the benefit of one more intelligent judgment as to plans and methods of work in evangelization among Roman Catholics." "Four and One-half Years in the Italy Mission" is this "one more intelligent judgment."

The book was published in 1894. At first sight it may look to-day somewhat belated. But, as a matter of fact, conditions have not changed: they are to-day what they were in earlier years, only more pronounced in their tendencies and activities, as those conversant with things in Italy amply testify. To this, moreover, the Board of Bishops are willing witnesses: "The methods of our mission in Italy are the same that have been pursued from the beginning, almost forty years ago."

Dr. William Burt is at the present time the Bishop in charge of the European missions of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. "Europe and Methodism" was published in 1909. "*Cenni Storici*" is the history in the Italian language of the workings of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Italy. "*L'Evan-gelista*" is the official newspaper of Methodism in Italy.

The attitude of the Vatican towards the Methodist Episcopal Mission is clear. It is that of absolute aloofness. What else is allowable? Methodism is its open enemy. War, bold and virulent, upon the Vatican, upon its vital principles, upon its sacred traditions, is the avowed and oft-declared purpose of Methodism. The methods made use of are vilest epithets, most shameless calumnies, insults most outrageous. The allies whose co-operation is courted are the lowest and most disreputable, to whom all offences are forgiven in view of their hatred of the Catholic Church and its supreme chieftain. And to refuse its most courteous smiles to the soldiers and the abettors of Methodism in Italy is in the Vatican bigotry and intolerance, enmity irreducible to the principles and practices of civil and religious freedom!

The Methodist Church in Italy is not there to care for Methodists, residents or tourists. Several non-Catholic Churches, Greek and Protestant, are in Italy to minister to their followers, making no bold assault on other creeds. Different is Methodism. Dr. Stackpole is its spokesman, as from the summit of the Pincian Hill he watches the rays of the evening sun kissing the cupola of St. Peter's:

"There, across the Tiber, is the massive pile of St. Peter's and the Vatican. Here at last is the citadel of the hostile forces. Here is the centre of that huge system of error and superstition that we have come so far to spend our life in opposing. The might of ancient Rome vanished before the presence of our barbaric ancestors. Why not this new and mightier Rome be conquered by weapons of the Gospel truth?" [Dr. Stackpole's Methodism?] "Not in our day, to be sure; but it is a great privilege to have even a small part in the beginning of that mighty contest."

"*Cenni Storici*," too, voices the intent of Methodists in Rome:

"The Protestant legions must gather all their energies and assail Popery, in its citadel, in Rome. Hence the most noble appeal of Bishop Walden: 'Before evangelizing the world, we must evangelize Rome.'"

Italy is the Catholic of Catholic lands: within its borders dwells the supreme chieftain of the Catholic Church. Rome is the citadel: it must be captured—*Delenda est Carthago*.

That the purpose of Methodism in Rome is understood by the Roman population, Catholic and non-Catholic, is made clear by "*Il Giornale d'Italia*" (April 5th, 1910), a newspaper quite sufficiently tinged with modernism and anti-clericalism to absolve it from any spirit of subserviency to the Vatican. "*Il Giornale*" says:

"The Methodist Institute of Via Venti Settembre is not merely a place of worship or of religious instruction, but a real centre of anti-Catholic and anti-papal warfare, closely linked in with that carried on by Masonry and anti-clericalism, as with other attacks and injuries continuously directed against the Pontiff and the Catholic Church, with a continuous propaganda in favor of apostacy among Catholic clergy and laity. A centre of the kind, not so much of Protestant religion, as of anti-Catholic and anti-papal sectarianism, bears with it such an offence against the Pontiff that it were absurd to pretend—as it has been pretended—that one should be received by the Pope who was ready to make an address in the halls of the Methodists, and there give encouragement to the work they have in hand."

War upon the Catholic Church and its supreme Pontiff! Even so, well and good, if the Church leading in the war, calling itself Christian, were there, in the name of sincere belief, to state correctly its convictions and the arguments therefor, to state correctly the creed and practice of its opponents and the arguments thereagainst: one should respect sincerity, however much ill informed: one should treat gently arguments, however weak and

aimless. But proselytism of decent kind is unknown to Methodism in Italy. I give samples of its "pure gospel" methods.

Here is a cartoon, appearing on the front page of "*L'Evangelista*," September 17th, 1909. Christ, scourge in hand, stands on a high throne, whence the Pope has been driven. A Bible opened to the page upon which the words appear, "My Kingdom is not of this world," lies in the chair where heretofore the Pope was seated. The Pope, cowering and dismayed, in drunken scowl, rolls down the steps, across which scatter broken fragments of tiara, mitre, chalice, thurible and other insignia of the pontifical office.

"*La Nazione*" of Florence, a quite un-Catholic journal, publishes, April 13th, 1910, on the occasion of the visit of Mr. Roosevelt to Rome, a letter of its Roman correspondent. The letter begins with remarks by no means complimentary to the Cardinal Secretary of State and continues:

"But it is more than probable that, whosoever the Cardinal holding the place of Merry del Val, would, in the given circumstances, have acted as the latter acted. I do not easily understand—and in saying this I do not believe I shall lose the esteem of my readers—what sort of people those Methodists are, and what they have in mind. Some days ago, passing through Via Venti Settembre, I stopped to glance at the titles of books exhibited in the windows of their publishing-house. Here are samples: '*Le Infamie dei Papi*' ('Infamies of Popes'), '*Le Lordure dei Pontifici*' ('Pontifical Filthiness'), '*Il Papa va Scacciato*' ('The Pope Driven Away'), and so on in the list before my eyes."

How Bishop Burt usually presents to his readers or hearers the teachings of the Catholic Church is indicated by a quotation from "Europe and Methodism." Speaking of the Greek Church, he writes:

"The study of God's Word has not only been discouraged, but often forbidden. Mass is substituted for the Gospel, penance for repentance, and the Virgin Mary and the saints for Christ. . . . Religion and conduct are separate affairs. The conception of God is that of an austere judge whose anger must be appeased by the constant repetition by chanting in an unknown tongue. It is pagan in all but name"—

adding to this tirade, utterly unfair to the Greek Church: "The evils of the Greek Church are multiplied and emphasized in Romanism." What a parody of Catholic teaching! "Mass substituted for the Gospel—Penance for repentance—the Virgin

Mary and the saints for Christ!" What Dr. Stackpole holds with regard to the Catholic Church is told in "Four and One-half Years":

"The Church has become what some civilized heathens want it to be. They want a Church that has power on earth and in Purgatorio to forgive sins. They want a Church that can save them without the necessity of thorough repentance on their part and corresponding reformation of conduct."

How any one in the cloth of Dr. Stackpole could dare assert as the belief of Catholics that salvation is to be had without thorough repentance on their part and a corresponding reformation of conduct passes ordinary power of thought. But so he wrote and so, no doubt, he preached. The investment of one penny for a copy of "The Catholic Child's Catechism," in America or in Italy, would have brought before his eyes the chapter on "Contrition" and disabused him of his error: but the investment was not made.

In 1904 Bishop Newman laid the corner-stone of the Methodist establishment in Via Venti Settembre: his sermon on the occasion was a brutal attack on the Papacy. Recalling the time following the reign of Constantine, he described it as

"a thousand years of religious despotism, in which Popes without God, and priests without culture, led the Church into the darkness of the Middle Ages" (*'Cenni Storici'*).

And so on, with preachers of Methodism from their entrance into Italy down to the pastorate of Rev. B. M. Tipple, whose recent utterance flashed across the ocean:

"The fact is that the Vatican is incompatible with Republican principles. . . . Is the Catholicism of America to be American or Romish? . . . If it is to be Romish, then every patriotic American should rise to crush it, for Romish Catholicism is the uncompromising foe of freedom."

What freedom Rev. Mr. Tipple has in mind we gather from his manner of speech. It is the freedom to belie the Catholic Church in most shameful degree, to level against its chieftain with most unmannered tongue vilest epithets.

"The Gospel in Italy," according to Dr. Stackpole, "must be accompanied with mighty power. A style of Christianity that verges almost upon fanaticism is needed." From beginning to

end fanaticism rages in Italian Methodism. It reaches its acme in "*L'Evangelista*." Writing of the birth of "*L'Evangelista*," Dr. Stackpole had said: "The effort was made to make the paper intensely religious and distinctively Methodist." Later he had reason to complain that its pronouncements were not sufficiently Methodist: "It is of the utmost importance that a full-blooded Methodist be the editor of that paper." "The full-blooded Methodist" was found.

The columns of "*L'Evangelista*" teem with insults to the Catholic Church and the Pontiff except, I must say, when articles appear there from the pen of Bishop Vincent. Its mildest term for Catholic doctrine and practice is "corruptions and superstitions." It never calls the Church by its proper name, Catholic; it is "the Romish" or "the Papist Church." In the number of January 31st, 1909, the "Papist" Church becomes "the harlot," the Pope "the beast" of the Apocalypse. In the number of February 7th, 1901, the accusation is made that while Popes preach the indissolubility of marriage they are ever ready with divorces in favor of the rich and the powerful. Another time, September 17th, 1909, it delivers itself of this characteristic outpour of venom:

"The Romish clergy represent Christ just as much as Harlequin represents Italy. That is the Italian mask, not Italy, as clericalism is the mask of Christ, not Christianity. The clergy is the *protossido christiano*, the corruption of Christianity. The priest represents the Pope, and Popery the rust which has corroded the Gospel for centuries."

The enemy of the Catholic Church, no matter how brutal he otherwise be, is taken hold of approvingly by "*L'Evangelista*." The Giordano Bruno anniversary, February 17th, 1910, was seized upon by socialists and anarchists as a propitious occasion to vent forth insults against civic law and order, no less than against the Catholic Church, against religion of any kind or form. The London "Saturday Review" describes the Bruno demonstration as disgraceful to common civilization. But the demonstration was anti-Papal; it obtained applause from "*L'Evangelista*."

The climax is reached in the hearty endorsement given to "*L'Asino*." I quote from the Roman journal, "*Il Bastone*," February 11th, 1910. "*Il Bastone*" says:

"Under the caption—'Protestants and L'Asino'—'*L'Asino*,' edited by Guido Podrecca, reproduces in its last number an article from '*L'Evangelista*,' the organ of Methodism in Rome, in which '*L'Asino*' is lauded loudly, and declared worthy of the support of Methodists. Among other expressions of cordial fraternization with '*L'Asino*' in the article of '*L'Evangelista*' there is this: 'There are fields of common activity upon which we extend to this journal [*L'Asino*'] a fraternal hand in its holy war against the heresies and the obscurantism of Romanism.'"

Should Dr. Stackpole still be one of the readers of "*L'Evangelista*," he will be satisfied with its fanaticism. What is "*L'Asino*"? It is the filthiest of filthy publications. Its articles reek with obscenity. Self-respecting people quickly turn away when at a street-corner kiosk their eyes light upon its lurid illustrations. In November, 1908, the United States postal authorities forbade its entrance into America.

I pass to a consideration of the methods adopted in winning in Italy recruits to Methodism. The Board of Bishops call for "details of specific acts" supposed to merit censure: I furnish the details. The Board repose full confidence "in the moral integrity" of Methodist missionaries and methods in Italy: the reader is left to be the judge.

The first care of the Methodist propaganda was, as might have been expected, to provide agents of dissemination—preachers, catechists, colporteurs of tracts and Bibles. That a few pass first muster who afterwards prove faithless need not cause surprise: but this much "moral integrity" in the leaders should require, that the system of selection be cautious and discriminating, to the effect that the ministry as a whole be guarded from scandal and disgrace. Dr. Stackpole is witness as to facts:

"The policy and practice from the first has been to choose our preachers mainly from two elements—ex-priests and ex-Waldensians. There is a heterogeneous remainder that comes from other denominations and is worked up at random. . . ."

Of preachers drawn from the Waldensians Dr. Stackpole writes:

"The Waldensian element consists of preachers who, for various reasons, could not obtain a pastorate in the Waldensian Church, or who have not wished to accept such pastorate as was offered."

This his judgment of those who formerly were Catholic priests:

"Some priests are *ex* necessarily. They have quarrelled with their superiors, or have been guilty of some immorality, or they want more

salary, or to get married. . . . Usually they are careful to provide for future employment before their conscientious scruples force them out of the priesthood."

The Catholic Church is severe in its sacerdotal exigencies: the unworthy priest is quickly forced from the ranks: so long as human nature remains some such there will be. The Methodists are welcome to them.

A theological school for the training of native Methodist preachers was opened in Florence. Sixty-five applicants wrote for admission. The principal attraction of the school was its gratuitousness:

"It is hard for young men in Italy to find employment. Many of these would just as lief preach as not, if they are well paid for it. When to the attraction of a lucrative position in the near future there is added the inducement of entire support during the three years of preparation, the theological school becomes an *El Dorado*. . . ."

Nine were selected out of the sixty-five. Here is their record: No. 1 had been expelled from a Catholic Seminary and later had been President of the Y. M. C. A. in Milan. He could pray with unction; he lied and stole. He had to be sent away. No. 2 was an Austrian music-teacher. He left the school, writing that if he was not paid 500 francs he would throw a bomb that would shatter Methodism. No. 3 had been dismissed from the Italian Protestant Free Church. The faculty of the school ordered him away for general unworthiness, but, this notwithstanding, the Presiding Elder named him to a pastorate, which he afterwards abandoned. No. 4 was the son of a Wesleyan preacher. He was a blockhead and nothing could be made of him. No. 5 had been expelled from a theological school in Geneva: he left the Florence school for the army. No. 6 was dismissed by the faculty for refusal to break off secret associations; despite this, however, later he was employed as a Methodist preacher in a large Italian city. No. 7 remained in the school one year, showing himself in the judgment of the faculty unworthy of the ministry, but all the same was put in charge of a congregation by the Presiding Elder. No. 8 after a year's study was prematurely put into the ministry; he never amounted to much. No. 9 proved himself rather satisfactory. Dr. Stackpole's excuse for having admitted such students to the school is significant in its naïveté:

"We simply obeyed the wishes of our superiors in office. It was argued that we must have a certain number of students in order to make a respectable report to the Church in America."

The story of men admitted to the ministry, as told by Dr. Stackpole, is pathetic—all the more so that it covers not the exception, but the rule. I quote instances. Ernesto Philippi, a former Wesleyan, offered himself to preach for 1,400 francs a year on condition that he retain his position as government teacher at 1,900 francs a year; but after a few months he demanded that lighter work be assigned him at the same salary, and this being refused he quitted altogether the Church. The ex-priest Palmieri had to be dismissed on account of financial entanglements, whereupon his whole congregation withdrew from Methodism with the exception of the janitor, who, it seems, had not conscientious regard enough for the interests of the Church to resign a salaried position. Of several missionaries set to work in Milan, one, an ex-priest, was discharged after three months; the second, an ex-theological student, did great harm; a third, converted "while leaning on the tomb of General Gordon at Westminster," did much damage for four months, later, "through recommendations unwisely given," getting himself into a Waldensian Theological School and finally winding up in jail for attempted murder and embezzlement. A preacher, engaged for work in Turin, received "a louder call to another church" and sent in his resignation. One, admitted from Wesleyanism, was sent away for having published a book rank with Pantheism, but "on the warm recommendation of the Presiding Elder" was able to find ministerial work in another Evangelical Church in Italy.

The attraction of the Methodist ministry in Italy?

"Men of mercenary spirit in other denominations learn that 'we pay our preachers magnificently,' as one had said, and hence they seek admission into our Church, and betray their own."

The salaries of Methodist preachers are from \$200 to \$300 higher than those of preachers of other denominations; house rent and other accessories computed, they are in large cities twice more than the salaries allotted to college professors in the same cities. In addition to the direct ministerial salary there is an extra allowance of \$36 or \$38 per annum for each child in the

preacher's family under the age of twenty-one. It is simply a question of generosity on the part of contributors in America to cover the whole Italian peninsula with evangelists of Methodism. Money draws the preacher; money retains him at his post. "He is always ready to join another denomination if thereby his salary can be increased." The Methodist Church is generally supposed in Italy to possess immense wealth and demands upon its treasury measure up to the financial esteem in which it is held. One Bracchetto, of Turin, calls for sums so extravagant that he must be turned down: he at once makes himself busy seeking an appointment in another Church. An unmarried preacher, off on a mission to Italians in America, demands the sum of \$900 for travelling expenses. Almost invariably when a preacher leaves of his own accord or is sent off by his superiors a bonus is paid to insure his peace. Nor is the lust of money the malady only of preachers. It is in the bone and marrow of theological students. It enters into the deep fibre of servants and colporteurs. A janitor demands an increase of salary: "I got a good many to join your religion." The pay of a Bible woman is discontinued: at once she, her family, and her friends abandon Methodism and say all they can to injure it.

"Whoever has once been in the pay of our mission as preacher, Bible woman, janitor, organist, etc., etc., and has, for any cause, been discharged has become at once a bitter opponent of our Church, proving thereby that his motive for uniting with us was a mercenary one."

As with ministers and employees so with the rank and file of converts and probationers. Seldom the light leading to Methodism is a ray from the sky: rather is it the glitter of gold and silver. The cord that draws is money, the link that binds is money.

"The better and nobler class of Italians we have not reached. Our system attracts the mendicants as molasses draws flies. . . . A lot of mendicants flock to the Church. We mean not only beggars, but those who have the mendicant spirit, who want their religion at the cheapest possible spirit with a chromo thrown in. . . . A crowd of tramps and beggars knock at the door. If they don't receive what they want, they will leave the Church and go to another, similarly organized but more liberal in its distributions of money."

A Sunday-school was organized at Bologna. As an attraction there was a prize for each attendant every Sunday. Forty pupils

were soon reported. But as weekly gifts soon became too expensive and distributions were confined to solemn occasions the pupils protested: "Then we won't come to Sunday-school"; not one of the forty remained. Begging as a trade is quite customary with converts: it pays to join the Church: it pays to remain with it.

"Lots of mendicants go about Italy with a certificate in their pocket that they belong to some Evangelical Church. Some such beggars have called upon us, wearing kid gloves, and a cane."

Converts must be had: when all appliances to obtain them fail they must be dreamt of and set down in reports to conferences and treasuries. Nothing more misleading, more incorrect than the reports of preachers. Statistics are exaggerated knowingly and with malice prepense; tricks used to swell numbers are not revealed: defections, wholesale at times, are not noted. "Moral integrity" with a vengeance! Dr. Stackpole asked the pastor of a church why he did not correct the records and report only actual members to be found? The pastor replied: "That would not please certain authorities." To the question, how many of his fifty-four members gave evidence of conversion, the pastor of the church at Pontedera answered: "Four or five." In the church in Faenza the minutes reported an average attendance of twenty-five: for three years, however, the audience was more often three than twenty-five. "We asked one of the preachers," says Dr. Stackpole, "why he did not cut down the report to actual facts, and he replied: 'That would not please the Presiding Elder.'" "Every preacher in the Italian mission," Dr. Stackpole adds, "knows that all the authorities on both sides of the ocean want to see every year an increase of members, probationers, conversions, and they are accommodating enough to make the desired increase." In some ten years over \$20,000 had been sent to the Bologna mission. A showing of results was a necessity: 150 names were placed on the register. A new pastor, however, coming to Bologna, found only two in attendance at religious service. Better yet was the way things were done in Venice. There it had been the custom, when a visit was expected from the Presiding Elder, to ask the minister of another denomination to send his congregation to the Methodist service so as to make a good impression on the Elder. Still

more clever, in a similar emergency, was the trick of a certain other preacher, "who went into the street and café and hired an audience at a cent apiece." Nor is there, in those reports of preachers, the slightest intimation of the instability of converts. With converts to Methodism it is a coming and going, as the wind blows, as the daily quotation of temporal gain rises or falls. In Palermo a Presbyterian congregation voted themselves into Methodism and a Methodist preacher was sent to them. After two months the preacher was ordered away with this parting cheer: "We have had enough of the Methodist Church." The pastor of a congregation in Piazzoli, Rome, went over to another denomination and was followed by his whole congregation. In Florence a Wesleyan minister brought over to Methodism his former congregation, but soon pastor and flock took objection to a mild and partial enforcement of Methodist discipline and no more did they float the Methodist banner. In their eagerness to swell their list of conversions preachers browse upon the pasture fields of other Protestant Churches—the Swiss Presbyterian, the English Wesleyan, the Independent Church of Italy, the Waldensian. But converts are all alike:

"Any trifling circumstance is enough to sever their connection with the Church. The whole basis is unsound. It is an attempt to build up the Kingdom of God by a judicious use of money alone, which proves to be the most injudicious use to which money can be put."

Money for schools is poured into Italy, into Rome particularly. To read the list of school buildings, the description of their imposing architecture and thorough equipment, to hearken to the copious reports of registration and attendance, one is breathless—the Eternal City suddenly made Methodist, the Vatican sorrowing in silence, the disciples of John Wesley in supreme command! The picture, however, calls for closer examination.

Some items from "Four and One-half Years" telling of Methodist schools fifteen years ago are illuminative: they cast light on the present no less than on the past. Attention, Dr. Stackpole advises, must be given to modern languages, especially English. The schools, whether for boarders or day scholars, must be gratuitous or semi-gratuitous (with the emphasis strongly upon the last part of the compound) with books and clothes frequently thrown in for nothing. Of a proposed boarding-school in Rome he writes:

"A semi-gratuitous school in Rome will attract a class of pupils who will be glad to have a furnished room in Rome and instruction in English and French for six dollars a month. The furnished room alone is worth that."

Despite, however, the free or semi-free attractions, results were scant. So when a showing was called for, recourse was had to the usual padding of figures. A "Boys' Institute" was opened in Rome. According to "The Gospel in All Lands," July, 1892, this institute had in attendance eighty pupils: in reality it had at the time only eight, mostly charity pupils, three of whom later were expelled for stealing. The elementary school enjoyed a larger patronage: but attendance had little meaning so far as permanent results would go. So soon as pupils were able to earn a few cents a day they went to work, or the priest had interfered and taken them away. In both cases the pupils were lost to Methodism.

Dr. Stackpole wrote in 1894. Since then schools were opened in greater number, money was spent with greater liberality, and registration and attendance of pupils increased. The methods, however, did not change in spirit or in aim and results for Methodism were not a whit more encouraging.

Of Methodist schools and refuges in Rome during recent years I speak from personal observation and inquiry. For a time those schools and refuges seemed to flourish. The peril they omened to Catholic faith was not so apparent to parents or pupils as it since was seen to be. Neither were Catholics—priests or people—as quickly on the alert as the peril demanded: they were almost taken by surprise through the suddenness of the invasion. And the Irish Christian Brothers had not yet arrived on the scene to open English-teaching schools in Rome.

It is not to be wondered at that a number of pupils were gathered into schools and refuges, where all sorts of advantages were offered gratuitously or semi-gratuitously, and, at the same time, assurance was given that the intention was benevolence, not proselytism. A most attractive bait was the teaching of English. There is a rage in Italy to learn English. Legions of English-speaking tourists swarm annually through the Peninsula. Cabmen, hotel-runners, shop clerks, male and female servants, feel they must understand and speak English to ply effectively their trade. Italians, too, in throngs emigrate to America: many seek

to obtain a smattering of the language they will make use of in their new home. And then upon all there rests the spell of America, the land of prosperity, of freedom, the dreamland of the future. The picture of an American school dazzled the fancy. It was clever, we must say, on the part of the Methodists, to see in those conditions of mind an opportunity for their propaganda and to put it at once to profit. It was true American ingenuity. Nor was money lacking—America was behind the scheme. Tuition, board and lodging in comfortable quarters were offered gratuitously or semi-gratuitously (the emphasis always strong on the second part of the compound, as Dr. Stackpole counsels), and in order that there be no barrier to arrest the incoming of pupils the hint was gently thrown out whenever needed that the religious convictions of each and every one would be respected—doses of Methodism to be given out quietly between lessons.

The hiding of the intention to proselytize is contemptible. Yet there it was. At the public inauguration of the Crandon Institute—a school for the daughters of the so-called better classes—the directress, Miss Vickory, set forth the institution as “respecting the religious convictions of all.” Yet in her report to the Conference, in 1899, while admitting that “some parents do not want their children to enter a Protestant church,” she frankly says: “We have established service in the interior of the institution itself every Sunday morning. Our Italian minister presides and all our boarders are obliged to assist at it.” The Isabella Clark Refuge confesses positive treachery to the wishes of parents:

“Despite the efforts of the parents, who, though taking advantage of the material benefits that we furnish them, try to prevent their children from knowing and practising the truths of our Christian religion, we find with pleasure that the little ones do not forget the prayers they hear and the nice hymns they sing” (*Cenni Storici*).

For forty years Methodism has been at work in Italy, spending there meanwhile immense sums of money. With the results of Methodism in Italy the Board of Bishops are satisfied. They even venture to see in the charges brought against its methods and aims a recognition of its “success.”

Bishop Burt speaks officially. According to statements in “Europe and Methodism,” Methodism in Italy, in 1881, counted ministers, 19; members and probationers, 1,019; and, in 1907,

ministers, 43; members and probationers, 3,689; Sunday-school scholars and teachers, 1,922.

At face value, the figures afford slight room for a paean of triumph. But, as a matter of fact, a wide distinction must be noted between figures and realities. The figures, of course, were gathered from Elders and ministers. Methods of counting members and probationers being much the same to-day as in the time of Dr. Stackpole—the Board of Bishops will have us believe that they are exactly the same—we are compelled to make heavy allowance for sundry tricks and exaggerations, and eliminate from Bishop Burt's figures the outgrowth of all such methods. And then, with something like realities before us, we call for further sifting, since the purpose is to discover the exact residuum of genuine Methodism in Italy. How many of those actually registered as "members and probationers" are "members," and how many are "probationers"? "Probationers," we claim, count for little. They are mere probabilities, oftener mere possibilities. Not seldom they are people who, now and then, peep into Methodist chapels to see what is going on, or who register their names at one and the same time as "probationers" and as petitioners for gifts of charity. And as to "members," how many are Simon-pure, disinterested converts, as distinguished from men and women liable to suspicion in the motives of their attachment to the new faith, such as we must consider those classes of mendicants and salaried employees so graphically described by Dr. Stackpole? The "ministers," too, should be divided into two categories—on the one side, ministers earnestly unselfish and evangelical, and, on the other, ex-priests, ex-Waldensians, ex-Presbyterians, the vast majority of whom, it is admitted, preach for a price, and only for a price. Already I have given details as to how Sunday-schools are recruited, so that no effort of fancy is needed to simmer down to reason the figures of Sunday-school pupils and teachers reported by Bishop Burt.

Bishop Burt must be heard from again before we believe that Methodism in Italy is anything beyond a disbursing bank, an aggregation of chapels and school buildings, a counting-house of insults and injuries against the Catholic Church and its Pontiff, a big bag of wind and loud shouting.

Against the reports of Bishop Burt I set statements recently

forwarded to me by a well-known Roman priest, actively engaged in counteracting the Methodist propaganda, Rev. P. Mandato, S. J.:

"The number of so-called converts to Methodism is very small. Methodists count as converts all those who through curiosity fill now and then their halls and chapels. Their work of perversion is chiefly amongst the children and the youths of the poverty-stricken. As to grown-up persons, they make among them very few proselytes; most of those they seem to win over are people who formerly had no religion or were firebrands of social or political revolutions, joining the Methodists in order to shout in company against Pope and Church. Some families I know are bound to go to the Methodist Church because the fathers are employed in the Methodist printing-house or some other Methodist institution. The 'Society of the Preservation of the Faith' is very efficient in counteracting the Methodist propaganda. Methodists are making no real progress; rather they are losing ground. As to gains to Methodism from schools and refuges—the efforts of the Methodists are directed especially towards the children of the very poor, to whom the bait is held out of free education and the teaching of English in attractive and comfortable quarters. But even those children are withdrawn so soon as the parents are made aware of the perils to which their faith is exposed, or similar advantages are offered to them in Catholic institutions. There is also the Crandon International Institute for girls of the better people; but generally the girls who go there for schooling do not frequent their worship and remain as they were, Catholics or Jewesses, or of no religion at all, according as they had been previously brought up by their parents."

So far the aims and methods of Methodism in Italy; and so far the success with which those aims and methods have been rewarded. I trust the Board of Bishops are satisfied that the details of the specific acts upon which charges against Methodism in Italy have been made are now stated with such clearness and precision that the validity of those charges may now be tested, at the good pleasure of the Board, before the judgment of the country. To what extent there has been "an unprovoked and unwarranted" attempt to "discredit" one of their "most successful missions" by calumnious accusations the country will determine.

It was my task to justify the attitude of aloofness adopted by the Vatican towards Methodism in Italy—as shown on sundry occasions, specifically so in the circumstances attending the recent visit of Mr. Roosevelt to Rome.

It was not Methodism, the Board of Bishops would have us

believe, that was in the mind of the Vatican in connection with the visit of Mr. Roosevelt, but diplomacy and etiquette—Methodism being brought forward merely as a diversion to cover and conceal the real issue in question.

As the words of the Bishops must be interpreted, the Pontiff finds in the facts of its propaganda no justification for his attitude towards the Methodist Church, as towards all who either give ready approval to it, or through stress of circumstances, without will or wish of their own, are in peril of being entangled into giving to it, directly or indirectly, countenance or encouragement. The diplomatic exigency to which the Bishops make reference is, of course, the position maintained by the Pontiff since the loss of his temporal power towards the Italian Government.

I can assure the Board of Bishops that in the mind of the Pontiff and in that of the Cardinal Secretary of State there was not the slightest thought of local diplomacy when a reply was given to the request of Mr. Roosevelt for an audience. A year ago I was talking with the Cardinal Secretary of State about the coming of Mr. Roosevelt to Rome. The Cardinal expressed the great pleasure it would be to the Pontiff and to himself to meet Mr. Roosevelt and show to him every token of the high esteem in which they held himself and the country he represented. I ventured to say that most likely Mr. Roosevelt would visit the Quirinal before visiting the Vatican. The Cardinal replied: no objection to that in the case of Mr. Roosevelt.

It was not local diplomacy; it was the Methodist Church in Rome that brought on the difficulty. It is the custom of the Methodist Church in Rome to seize upon distinguished American visitors for addresses in its halls and chapels to the purpose of draping itself in the eyes of the Roman people with the mantle of American honor and American prestige. Mr. Seth Low went from an audience with the Pontiff to the Methodist Chapel and made there an address—all unconscious, I am sure, of the consequences to follow. It was a triumph for Methodism. Says "*Cenni Storici*":

"The fact that the Hon. Seth Low, the ex-Mayor of New York, as a political and liberal man, came to pay a visit to our College, and held there a splendid discourse to the pupils of all our institutions of Rome, assembled in our American Church, has shaken the nerves of our enemies

(Pope and Catholics). Many reporters were present who produced the brilliant speech in the city papers."

Later Mr. Fairbanks, who, of course, had never read Dr. Stackpole or "*L'Evangelista*," was taken hold of, and much ado there was in papers both of Rome and of America over his speech in the Methodist hall. Now Mr. Roosevelt was coming. So far as precedents gave lesson, the Vatican could not but fear that pressure might be brought to bear on him to induce him to lend his favor in whatever degree to the Institute of Via Venti Settembre. With the purposes and wiles of the institute Mr. Roosevelt, it was thought, most likely was not conversant: so far he had had no occasion to run up against its ruling spirit, Rev. Mr. Tipple. The honor of the Vatican was supreme, as it should be, in the mind of the Cardinal: it must at all hazard be safeguarded; neither must obstacles intervene that should keep the doors of the Vatican from being thrown wide open in greeting to Mr. Roosevelt. So in reply to Mr. Roosevelt's request for an audience a message was sent, courteous and confidential, acceding, of course, to the request, yet intimating the unpleasant position to which the Vatican would be reduced were there the least peril that what had happened to Mr. Low and to Mr. Fairbanks were by any miscalculation or oversight to happen to him. The more illustrious the visitor, the more was he to be put on his guard. Unfortunately, the message of the Vatican reached Mr. Roosevelt under the cover of comments from the hand of the American Ambassador to the Quirinal and was read in the glare of those comments. Certainly the situation was perplexing. The comments of Mr. Leishman under his eyes, the answer given by Mr. Roosevelt is not a surprise to Americans. Subsequent developments brought further confusion. There were other and yet more embarrassing comments from Mr. Leishman to Mr. Roosevelt; and there was the cavalier and unwarranted declaration of Mr. O'Loughlin to the Cardinal that Mr. Roosevelt was just the man to go from the Vatican to the Methodist hall. Circumstances, let us say, conspired to defeat an understanding which was sure to be, had Mr. Roosevelt and the Cardinal Secretary of State come face to face, or had they spoken to each other in direct correspondence without let or hindrance of intermediaries. However, as things went, the Cardinal Secretary of State, supremely preoccupied, as it was his duty to be, with the necessity

of safeguarding at all hazard the honor of the Holy See, was allowed no alternative: the audience was made impossible. Such the Roosevelt incident, in which, back of all the immediate circumstances, the one controlling element was the American Methodist Episcopal Church.

The attitude of the Vatican towards the Methodist mission must not be other than what it is. If in this attitude there is intolerance it is the intolerance of vile insult and treacherous fraud. With persons differing from it in creed, honorable in their sincerity of belief and well mannered in their bearing, the Vatican is always most tolerant, most courteous. But as was the Saviour Himself so is the Vatican, severe and intolerant when confronted by the Pharisee and the money-changer of the temple. Apart from his position as Vicar of Christ, the Pontiff of the Vatican rules a kingdom great in the majesty of history as no other kingdom present or past. It owes respect to itself; it owes respect to the hundreds of millions who venerate its spiritual sceptre: it must brook no friend, no foe, who casts insult into its face. And then the Vatican is the supreme guardian of faith and morals: when these are assailed, it must not, in manner least direct, betoken approval of the enemy—this, less than ever, when the targets of the attack are the more poor and helpless of its subjects, when missiles from the hostile camp, steeped in fraud and deceit, call for loud and insistent warning, lest the thoughtless and simple-minded be stricken unawares.

JOHN IRELAND.